

201442Z Nov 00

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ4913

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	SSR-00	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	/006W					

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7651
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 006455

SIPDIS

NAIROBI PLEASE TO A/S RICE

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH

LONDON FOR GURNEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2010
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [OPRC](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI APOLOGIZES TO AMBASSADOR FOR MDC
PRESS RELEASE

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CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR TOM MCDONALD FOR REASON 1.5
(D) .

¶1. (C) MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) PRESIDENT MORGAN TSVANGIRAI CAME TO THE CHANCERY ON NOVEMBER 20 AND APOLOGIZED TO AMBASSADOR MCDONALD FOR A PRESS RELEASE DATED NOVEMBER 16. AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE PRESS RELEASE CLAIMS THAT TSVANGIRAI AND AF ASSISTANT SECRETARY RICE DISCUSSED "HOW TO MANAGE A TRANSITION OF

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POWER" IN ZIMBABWE, AND CLAIMED A/S RICE SAID THAT "THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WAS KEEN TO ASSIST THE MDC IN RESTORING FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY IN THE COUNTRY AND ENDORSED THE NEED FOR ADDED PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE LAW AND ORDER RESUMED THROUGHOUT ZIMBABWE." TSVANGIRAI EXPLAINED THAT HE DID NOT AUTHORIZE THE MDC STATEMENT OF THE 16TH, AND ONLY FIRST LEARNED OF IT WHEN THE SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 18) EVENING TELEVISION NEWS ON THE ZIMBABWE BROADCASTING CORPORATION LED WITH THE EMBASSY'S STATEMENT REBUTTING THE CONTENTS OF THE NOVEMBER 16 MDC STATEMENT. TSVANGIRAI EXPLAINED TO US THAT AFTER SEEING THE STORY, HE IMMEDIATELY ATTEMPTED TO CONTACT THE AMBASSADOR FOR AN EXPLANATION, BUT SPOKE WITH THE DCM. THE DCM EXPLAINED THAT THE EMBASSY'S RESPONSE HAD BEEN PROMPTED BY THE APPEARANCE TWO DAYS EARLIER ON THE INTERNET OF AN APPARENTLY AUTHORITATIVE MDC RELEASE.

¶2. (C) THE MDC PRESIDENT CONTINUED THAT HE CHECKED WITH HIS INFORMATION CHIEF, NOMORE SIBANDA, WHO DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE PIECE. AFTER RESEARCHING THE MATTER FURTHER, THEY ESTABLISHED THAT ANNABEL HUQHES, "AN OVERZEALOUS STAFFER", HAD ISSUED THE STATEMENT.

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TSVANGIRAI STRESSED SHE HAD BEEN DEALT WITH. TSVANGIRAI

SIPDIS
SAID HE TOLD HUQHES THAT THE STATEMENT HAD PUT HIM IN AN EMBARRASSING POSITION AND IT WAS NOT THE WAY TO SECURE MUGABE'S OUSTER. HE HOPED THAT THE AMBASSADOR WOULD TAKE IT ON GOOD FAITH THAT HE HAD NOT ORDERED OR CLEARED ON THE STATEMENT ISSUED, AND WOULD NOT BREACH THE CONFIDENCE OF DISCUSSIONS HELD BEHIND CLOSED DOORS THIS TIME OR ON ANY OTHER OCCASION.

¶3. (C) AMBASSADOR MCOONALD ACCEPTED TSVANGIRAI'S APOLOGY AND NOTED THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY RICE HAD BEEN "QUITE CHAQRINED" WHEN SHE LEARNED OF THE STATEMENT'S CONTENTS AND THOUGHT IT REQUIRED AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE. HE STRESSED THAT THE USG DID NOT FAVOR A PARTICULAR PARTY IN ZIMBABWE AND INDEED, MAINTAINED ACTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE GOZ AND OPPOSITION GROUPS. THE AMBASSADOR SAID

THAT THE EMBASSY HAD MAINTAINED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE MDC IN THE PAST AND HOPED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO REPEAT OF THIS UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT. "ONCE BURNED, TWICE SHY," THE MOC PRESIDENT STATED, AND SAID HE WOULD PERSONALLY PEN AN APOLOGY TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY RICE. HE ALSO SHARED WITH US A COPY OF A PRESS RELEASE, WHICH THE MOC ISSUED NOVEMBER 19, CLARIFYING THE MATTER, THE TEXT OF WHICH APPEARS IN PARAGRAPH 4.

14. (U) BEGIN TEXT OF MOC PRESS RELEASE.

LAST WEEK THE UNITED STATES ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE SUSAN RICE WAS IN ZIMBABWE AND HELD CONSULTATIONS WITH A WIDE CROSS SECTION OF ZIMBABWEAN SOCIETY. WE CONFIRM THAT THE MOC HELD A MEETING WITH SUSAN RICE AND HER

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DELEGATION DURING HER CONSULTATIVE TOUR.

AT NO TIME DURING THE MEETING DID THE MOC REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO REMOVE PRESIDENT MUQABE FROM POWER OR INDEED ANY OTHER FORM OF ASSISTANCE FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. INSTEAD THE MOC PRESENTED TO SUSAN RICE AND HER DELEGATION ITS PERSPECTIVE OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CRISIS AS WELL AS THE MOC PERSPECTIVE ON HOW TO RESOLVE IT.

THE MDC STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT THE MANDATE OF PRESIDENT MUQABE LIES WITH THE ZIMBABWEAN PEOPLE AND THEY ALONE HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY.

CONTRARY TO THE STATEMENT ISSUED ON NOVEMBER 16, 2000, ON THE INTERNET THE MDC HAS MAINTAINED THE CONFIDENCE OF THE DISCUSSION. NO OFFICIAL STATEMENT WAS ISSUED, THEREFORE ANY SUGGESTION THAT THE MDC SOUGHT THE ASSISTANCE OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IS TOTALLY UNFOUNDED AND MISCHIEVOUS.

END TEXT.

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